

ABOVE THE GRID

ONLINE NEWSLETTER

"Knowledge. Creativity. Real Talk. Growth."



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THE 1ST ONE

From:

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Dear Friend & Subscriber,

I've been in the creative trenches for over fourteen years. I've worked with clients who had million-dollar brands and others who had zero logos and a dream. I've built my business from my living room. I'm raising four little boys in the midst of it all. And I've launched multiple creative ventures along the way.

And now, **I want to share everything I've learned.**

If you're here, it means you care about growth. About creativity. About building something that matters. You might be a freelancer, an entrepreneur, a business owner, or just a creative who's tired of feeling stuck.

Whatever brought you here, this is where you'll learn how to build **above the grid**. Meaning, above the noise, above the average, above the limits that most people never push past.

What "Above The Grid" Really Means

Let's talk about that name for a second.

In Photoshop, "the grid" helps you align your design. It keeps you straight, balanced, and organized. But real creativity? It happens above the grid. That's where the magic kicks in. Where instinct meets experience.

The same goes for life and business.

There's a grid for everything, actually. The expectations, the rules, the "supposed to" path. You go to school, you get the job, you stay safe, you retire, you die.

But what happens if you look above that grid?

You'll see a blank space full of possibilities. The place where people build businesses from ideas, make a living doing what they love, and define their own version of success.

That's what this brand is about.

Above the Grid is where creative meets strategic. Where design meets business. Where imagination meets momentum.

What You'll Get from Above the Grid

I'm not here to send you fluffy "inspirational" emails that sound like a motivational quote from the 2010s.

Every month, you're gonna get three things:

Perspective.

Real insight from real experience. The kind of perspective you can't Google. Even on the show & podcast, I'll talk with real business owners, entrepreneurs, creatives and much more. In short, folks you can genuinely connect with.

Practice.

Tools, techniques, and creative workflows I use every day in Photoshop, branding, strategy, development and marketing.

Purpose.

Clarity in what you're building, who you're serving, and why it matters.

This newsletter is for creatives who want to build smarter, not harder.

For business owners who want to stand out without selling their soul.

And for anyone ready to take control of their craft, their time, and their life.

My Story (The Short Version)

For a long time, I was like a lot of people.

Stuck.

I'd wake up late (I worked 12-hour nights at a factory), clock in, dream about doing my own thing, then clock out and work on it until I passed out.

I felt **guilty** for wanting more. I felt **silly** chasing creativity when I already had a "good job." But I couldn't ignore that pull.

So I quit.

I built Blayed Media, my creative business that now helps brands look like pros, even if they're still figuring it out. I've helped companies find their identity, polish their visuals, and communicate their story in a way that feels right.

I'm currently about to launch my next company, BAD Software. A creative studio where I design and program software applications as well as video games.

None of it was easy. But all of it was worth it.

Now, through Above the Grid, my secondary side-gig of a show/podcast/newsletter, I get to show you how to build your own path. **The smart, sustainable way.**

Lesson One: Clarity Beats Complexity

Here's a truth I've learned (and was guilty of at one time:

Most people fail because they overcomplicate everything.

We're all guilty of it. They chase ten ideas, master none. They'll try every marketing hack but never stick to a single system.

Clarity changes that.

When you know who you are, what you're building, and who you're building it for, **everything gets lighter.** Your brand voice sharpens. Your message clicks. You stop sounding like everyone else.

So this week, I want you to ask yourself these three questions:

- 1. What problem am I solving?**
- 2. Who actually needs it?**
- 3. How can I make it look and feel unmistakably mine?**

That's how clarity starts.

You just need a clear direction and the discipline to move one step at a time.

Value Section: The Creative Stack

Here are a few resources, ideas, and workflows that can boost your output right now, and this goes for creatives, business owners, entrepreneurs, and anyone else:

1. The "One Hour Rule."

Spend the first hour of every workday building something that's yours. Not for a client, not for your boss. For **you**. It keeps your spark alive and prevents burnout. Refine your systems, brainstorm new offers, build a workflow. Just make something that sharpens you.

2. Build a Resource Bank

Keep a folder of ideas, notes, screenshots, quotes, and tools that inspire you. When motivation runs low, this becomes your personal fuel station. (And don't forget to watch/listen to the Above the Grid show.)

3. Talk to Humans, Not Algorithms

When posting online or writing content, imagine one real person on the other end. Speak to them, not to "your audience." It's the fastest way to build trust and connection.

4. Simplicity Wins

Most breakthroughs come from focus, not complexity. Don't overbuild, overthink, or overdo. Know when to stop and let your work breathe.

5. Invest in Presentation

The details matter. Whether it's your proposal, your product, or your personal brand; how it looks and feels tells people what to expect. Presentation builds trust before you ever say a single word.

Creative Insight

Here's what most folks miss:

You don't need to look "big." You just need to look clear.

A one-person studio (like me) with solid branding will outshine a ten-person team with messy design every time.

Your design is your body language online. It speaks before you do.

If your logo looks rushed, your website feels cluttered, or your posts scream "template," people assume your business is rushed too.

That's not vanity, that's simple psychology.

Every detail sends a signal. The goal isn't perfection. It's coherence. A brand that feels confident earns confidence.

So whether you're a freelancer or a business owner, take this seriously:

Your visuals are your handshake. Make them firm, clean, and memorable.

Mindset Shift

The creative world glamorizes chaos. Late nights, coffee overload, the constant grind. But here's the truth:

You don't need to burn out to build something great!

Consistency beats intensity every time.

You don't need to create viral posts. You need to create rhythm. Show up. Keep building. Keep experimenting.

Success isn't about having time. It's about making space.

When you structure your day, protect your focus, and respect your boundaries, **creativity thrives.**

Above the Grid is about freedom through focus. That's what we're after here.

Where We're Going Next

Every month, expect a blend of creative tutorials, business insights, design deep dives, and interviews with real people doing real work in all sorts of niches.

You'll see behind the scenes of my projects, my Photoshop workflow, client stories, and a few lessons from failure too.

My YouTube show breaks down the process.

My podcast brings the real conversations.

My newsletter gives you the tools to actually use it all.

Together, they make one hell of a system for anyone serious about building momentum.

Final Thoughts

You made it to the end! That already puts you ahead of most people.

The truth? Most creatives talk about their dreams. Few build them.

If you're here reading this, you're already building.
You're already above the grid.

So keep going. Build something real. And remember, your work doesn't need to go viral to make an impact. It just needs to be authentic and consistent.

Thanks for being here from the start!

See you in the next one.

- Blayed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Blayed Dillon Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.